

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the Office Action mailed October 28, 2009.

By this Amendment, claims 2 and 13-15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to their underlying subject matter. Thus, claims 1 and 3-12 are currently pending in this application with claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, and 12 being withdrawn. Support for the claim amendments can be readily found variously throughout the specification and the original claims.

In view of these amendments, Applicant believes that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 2 and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over any one of the Shimotoyodome et al. patents (U.S. Patent No. 6,460,258, U.S. Patent No. 6,470,782, and U.S. Patent No. 6,478,206) in view of Zumstein (U.S. Patent No. 3,834,258) and/or Hembree et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,709,483). This rejection has been rendered moot by the cancellation of claims 2 and 13-15.

Request for Rejoinder

Applicant also hereby formally requests rejoinder of non-elected claims 6 and 7 upon the allowance of the elected claims. The non-elected claims include all the limitations of the allowable claims in accordance with §821.04 of the MPEP.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, all the claims now pending in the present application are believed to be clearly patentable over the outstanding rejections. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration of the claims in light of the above remarks is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.

Dated: January 28, 2010

Respectfully submitted,

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Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper, or if a petition for extension of time is required for timely acceptance of same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-4422 for any such fees; and Applicant(s) hereby petition for any needed extension of time.